

DRAFT: APPOINTING CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISORS

PURPOSE

This policy addresses the appointment of individuals to serve as supervisors on conservation district boards.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Conservation Commission to make appointments that will support the ongoing success of local conservation districts.

The Commission will make appointments that strengthen district boards by appointing only those individuals who are willing, able and capable of fulfilling the duties of the office of appointed supervisor. Appointed supervisors will add diversity of representation to district boards, allowing such boards to better address the diverse conservation needs occurring in conservation districts. Appointed supervisors will work with public agencies, landowners, and other groups to help conservation districts in achieving their goals and objectives.

To ensure the largest possible pool of suitable, qualified candidates, the Conservation Commission requires that districts provide adequate public notice regarding vacancies in appointed supervisor positions. The Commission will not make appointments until districts publicize vacant positions and proof of public notice is received by the Conservation Commission.

Appointed supervisors must meet the same eligibility requirements as exist for elected supervisors as defined in [RCW 89.08.160](#) and [RCW 42.04.020](#). Candidates who do not meet these eligibility requirements may still be appointed under a special circumstance consideration as determined by the Conservation Commission.

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Procedures for Conservation Commission Appointment of Two Supervisors to Each Conservation District

Timeline

- **July 1:** All incumbents with expiring terms and all affected conservation districts are notified of the expiring term(s) by the Conservation Commission. This information will be posted to the Conservation Commission website and applications for appointment will be invited from the general public.
- **July 1 through August 31:** Application period is open.
- **September 1:** Applications (including all supporting documents) for the position of Appointed Supervisor must be received by the Conservation Commission.
- **September/October:** Regional Appointment Committees meet to review applications and develop recommendations.
- **November/December:** The Conservation Commission considers recommendations of Regional Appointment Committees and makes appointments.
- **December 15:** Letters to all applicants and affected conservation districts are sent.
- **December 31:** Terms expire for Appointed Supervisors not reappointed.
- **January 1:** First day a newly appointed supervisor can take office.

A. Background

The Washington State Conservation Commission is obligated by RCW 89.08.200 to appoint two supervisors to each five-member board of conservation district supervisors in Washington State.

B. Term of Office

1. Appointed Supervisors serve three-year terms, expiring on December 31 of the third year of the term.
2. The terms are staggered.

3. Following official appointment to office by the Conservation Commission, terms of office begin on or after January 1 at the first regular or special conservation district board meeting.

C. Eligibility

1. One Appointed Supervisor shall be a landowner or farm operator as required by RCW 89.08.160.
2. Every Appointed Supervisor must be a Washington State registered voter.
3. Preference in appointments will be made for applicants who reside within the conservation district to be served, or who have a land interest within the boundary of conservation district to be served.
4. Applicants who do not reside within or do not have a land interest in the conservation district to be served may be considered for appointment if they:
 - a. Have prior experience as a conservation district supervisor on the district for which they wish to be considered for appointment; or
 - b. Bring special knowledge, skills or abilities to the conservation district board of supervisors as determined by the board of supervisors.

D. Qualifications

RCW 89.08.160 requires appointed supervisors to "...be qualified by training and experience to perform the specialized skilled services required of them." The judgement of the Conservation Commission shall be final in determining who meets this requirement.

1. Consideration will be given to applicants with applicable training or experience, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Formal education or experience in natural resources, physical sciences, governance, policy development or similar fields.
 - b. Education or training in evaluating natural resource concerns, selecting appropriate conservation practices and implementing such practices.
 - c. Experience in governing public agencies or managing private business entities.
2. Preference will be given to applicants who complete an orientation provided by the Conservation Commission or who have comparable knowledge as an associate supervisor of the conservation district board.

3. An appointed supervisor can only serve in one position on the board of supervisors of a conservation district and can only serve as a supervisor of one conservation district at any point in time.
4. If the applicant for the appointed position is currently serving as an elected supervisor for any conservation district, the applicant must resign the elected position prior to being appointed.

E. Due Notice

1. A Conservation District with a vacant or expiring Appointed Supervisor position is required to provide adequate public notice of the vacancy in some form of mass media such as newspapers, website(s), magazines, radio, or television that reaches the broadest sector of the Conservation District's total population.
2. The public notice should be published at least twice, with at least six days between publications.
3. The first notice must be made 45 days prior to the application deadline and the second notice at least one week prior to the application deadline.
4. Published notices may be legal notices in the newspaper of record for all counties with territory inside the conservation district boundary, but paid legal notices are not required. Costs of publishing legal notices will be paid by the conservation district.
5. Each public notice must include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. The fact there is a vacancy (current or upcoming) for an Appointed Supervisor position;
 - b. Basic eligibility requirements, namely, that appointed supervisors should be registered voters residing in, or having a land interest in, the conservation district, and that one of the two appointed positions must be a landowner or farm operator and if this appointed position is the one that requires the appointee to be a landowner or farm operator;
 - c. A brief description of the duties and time commitment involved with the position;
 - d. A statement indicating that a Conservation District supervisor serves without compensation;
 - e. Where to obtain an application; and
 - f. How to apply for the position by mailing the application to the Conservation Commission.

6. The Conservation Commission will publish expiration of terms and invite applications on the Commission website at <http://www.scc.wa.gov/>. The Conservation Commission reserves the right to submit news releases and legal notices directly to local newspapers, radio stations and similar media outlets to provide increased notification to local residents. Such notices will be at the expense of the Conservation Commission.

F. Notification to Incumbents and Districts

1. The Conservation Commission will notify the incumbents and the districts they serve of the expiration of their term by July 1 of the year the term is to expire.

G. Application Process

1. Application forms and guidance will be made available on the Conservation Commission website. Conservation districts will provide printed forms and guidance to anyone who requests such copies in printed form.
2. Only the applicant may submit an application to the Conservation Commission. Applications submitted on behalf of others will be rejected. The Conservation Commission will provide a copy of all applications to the appropriate conservation district.
3. Application deadlines will be the first day of September of each year. If the deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the first workday following the first day of September will be the deadline.
4. Applications and supporting materials are to be mailed directly to the Washington State Conservation Commission headquarters at PO Box 47721, Olympia, Washington 98504-7721. Faxed or e-mailed applications will not be accepted.

H. Regional Appointment Committee

1. Three regional appointment committees (RACs) will be created by the Conservation Commission.
2. Each RAC will be composed of, but not limited to, the regional Conservation Commission member elected to represent conservation districts, one or more Conservation Commission regional manager(s), and an area director of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts from the region.
 - a. The regional Conservation Commission member will be appointed to the appropriate RAC by the Chair of the Conservation Commission. Commission members serve until replaced.

- b. Conservation Commission regional managers serve at the pleasure of the Executive Director.
 - c. The area director(s) for each RAC will be appointed by the President of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts and will serve at the pleasure of the President.
- 3. Each RAC shall invite comments from affected conservation districts on all applicants in the region.
- 4. Each RAC will evaluate all applications for appointment for that region, and make recommendations for appointment to the Conservation Commission at a regular meeting prior to December 31 of that year. A RAC may recommend no applicant be appointed if applicants do not adequately fulfill the qualifications in section D.
- 5. The Conservation Commission may receive applications and recommendations, and take action, at any regular or special meeting.

I. Notice to Applicants and Assumption of Office

- 1. Final actions of the Conservation Commission will be communicated to all applicants and affected conservation districts by letter, and by posting on the Conservation Commission website, by December 15.
- 2. Appointed supervisors will take office after receiving a letter of appointment from the Conservation Commission and taking an oath of office administered by the Chair of the conservation district during any regular or special meeting of the board of supervisors, on or after January 1. Incumbents who are reappointed to the same position do not need to take the oath of office.

J. Mid-term Vacancy or Resignation

- 1. A conservation district shall immediately notify the Conservation Commission of the death or disappearance of an appointed supervisor.
- 2. The Conservation Commission may declare the position of appointed supervisor vacant if the incumbent is unable or unwilling to fulfill the duties of the position for at least three consecutive months. The Conservation Commission will work directly with the affected board of supervisors.
- 3. A conservation district board of supervisors may adopt a resolution requesting the Conservation Commission to initiate removal proceedings. The Conservation Commission will work directly with the affected board of supervisors.
- 4. Prior to adopting a resolution to request removal proceedings, a conservation district must notify the supervisor of its intent to request removal proceedings.

The conservation district must provide proof of such notification as part of its request to the Conservation Commission to initiate removal proceedings.

5. An incumbent may resign by writing directly to the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission will notify the conservation district of the vacancy as soon thereafter as practicable.
6. In the event a vacancy occurs before December 31 of the third year of the term, the Conservation Commission will specify a deadline for applications that provides at least 45 days for interested parties to apply for the vacant position. The appropriate RAC will review all applications, consult with each affected conservation district, and make recommendations directly to the Conservation Commission as soon as possible.
7. Applicants for mid-term appointed supervisor positions shall meet the same eligibility and qualification requirements (Sections C and D above) as applicants for full-term appointed supervisor positions.

DRAFT Application for the Position of Appointed Supervisor

Send the completed application to:

Washington State Conservation Commission
P.O. Box 47721
Olympia, WA 98504-7721
360-407-6200

Section 1. Personal Information

1. Name of Applicant: _____
2. Address (include City, State, Zip): _____
3. Phone Number (include area code): _____ Cell Phone: _____
4. E-mail Address: _____

Section 2. Qualifications

5. Are you a Washington State registered voter? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Are you a landowner or operator of a farm? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 7.a. Do you reside within the boundary of the conservation district for which you are applying? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 7b. Do you own land within the boundary of the conservation district for which you are applying? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Highest preference will be given to applicants who reside within the conservation district followed next by those who own land but do not reside within the conservation district.

8. Are you applying for appointment under special circumstances? ☐ Yes ☐ No
See Guidance for Applicants for more information. If Yes, please attach separate letter explaining circumstances.

Section 3. General Experience

9. What is your current occupation? _____
10. On what boards (including the board for which you are applying) or organizations (public or private) have you served, in what capacity, and when?

11. Please attach a resume or short biographical description of your occupations and community service experience.
12. Please request at least one letter of reference from a person who has worked with or supervised you in a position other than conservation district supervisor. We also encourage letters of support from other organizations. Reference(s) should send the letter(s) directly to the Conservation Commission at the address at the top of this application. Please provide contact information for your references.

Name	Phone No.	Address	E-mail
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Section 4. Conservation District Experience

13. Why are you interested in serving as a Conservation District board supervisor?

14. Have you ever attended a board meeting of this District? ☐ Yes ☐ No

15. What special training, skills and experience do you have that will help you execute the duties of a conservation district board member?

16. Have you served as a Conservation District supervisor before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, what years did you serve? _____

On what district board did you serve? _____

17.a. Have you completed an orientation given by the Conservation Commission? ☐ Yes ☐ No

17 b. Are you an Associate Supervisor or do you regularly attend meetings of the Conservation District Board of Supervisors for which you are applying? ☐ Yes ☐ No

A preference will be given for applicants who answer "Yes" to 17a. or 17b.

18. We would appreciate your comments on the mission statement and strategic plan for the Conservation District in which you are interested in serving. You may add additional sheets to capture your comments.

Section 5. Position Requirements

19. This is a volunteer position with no compensatory benefit. Please initial indicating you are willing to serve in an unpaid position as a Board Supervisor. _____

20. District Board meetings are held monthly and may last 1-3 hours each. There are also numerous committee meetings; an annual State CD meeting; and an area meeting. Please initial indicating you are able to commit the time necessary to attend these meetings: _____

21. Please initial that you are willing to be interviewed either in person or by telephone for this position. _____

22. Please initial that you understand all information in this application, including your resume and letters of reference, may be publicly disclosed as long as your right to privacy is not infringed. _____

I understand I am applying for a volunteer position for which I am eligible and qualified to serve. Any material misrepresentation will be grounds for removal if appointed.

Signature of Applicant

Date

- Applicant must sign form to be considered for appointment
- Applications must be received by the close of business on September 1 (or the first workday thereafter) if you are applying for a regularly expiring term. For other vacancies in the position of appointed supervisor, applications must be received by a date specified and published by the Conservation Commission at <http://www.scc.wa.gov/>.

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Introduction: Appointed Supervisor

Candidates interested in the position of Appointed Supervisor of a conservation district are offering to provide a valuable service to their local community.

Mission

The mission of a conservation district is to provide education, technical assistance and implementation of land management practices to private landowners who are interested in wise stewardship, conservation and protection of soil, water, and related natural resources on their land.

Each conservation district prepares and maintains a five-year or long-range plan, and from that a plan of work is developed annually to guide district program delivery.

Background

Conservation districts were authorized in 1939 by the Washington Legislature and are guided by Chapter 89.08 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), known as the conservation districts law.

The damaging effects of erosion and flooding are recognized as serious problems for the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of the state of Washington. Conservation districts provide support to landowners for the conservation of renewable resources for the benefit of all. RCW 89.08 has been amended over the years to address the changing nature of conservation issues and practices.

Conservation districts are non-regulatory local government bodies with the mission of support for voluntary conservation on private lands. Conservation districts are supported at the state level by the Conservation Commission which provides structure and leadership for good governance by the conservation districts. Washington State provides some funding for conservation districts, but conservation districts obtain funding from many sources, often in the form of grants or local assessments.

Organization

- A five person Board of Supervisors leads each district; each supervisor serves a three-year term.
- Three Supervisors are elected, one in the first quarter of each year.
- The Conservation Commission appoints two Supervisors in two years of a three-year cycle.
- A conservation district may have multiple non-voting Associate Supervisors.
- The staff is determined by the Board of Supervisors based on available funding and the skills needed to address the conservation needs of the community served by the district.

Supervisor Responsibilities

- A Supervisor is the community's voice to the district and the district's image to the community.
- Attend regular and special meetings of the Board of Supervisors, usually monthly. Meetings are open to the public.
- Serve on committees that address community-level natural resource concerns
Maintain accurate records of the proceedings, resolutions, etc. of the district (can be delegated to staff).
- Review and approve budgets and financial transactions conducted by the district
Provide for an annual audit of district accounts (may require time and effort of one or more Supervisors).
- Provide guidance to conservation district staff on the conservation concerns and needs of landowners and proposed solutions and sources of funds to meet these needs.
- Maintain communication with local, state, and federal governmental organizations involved with conservation of natural resources. (This may include municipal councils, county agencies, tribal councils, the Conservation Commission and other state agencies, and the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and U.S. Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.)
- Evaluate performance of district manager and select replacement when necessary.

DRAFT Guidance to Applicants: How to complete the Application for Appointment

Please contact your local conservation district or the Washington State Conservation Commission to request an application.

Section 1. Personal Information

- **Question 1:** *RESPONSE REQUIRED.* Please provide your legal name. If you generally go by a different first name, include it in parentheses. Example: Robert (Bob) Jones.
- **Question 2:** *RESPONSE REQUIRED.* We need your physical address. If your mailing address is different, please also provide your mailing address.
- **Question 3:** *RESPONSE REQUIRED.* We do need a phone number. Your cellular phone number is not required.
- **Question 4:** *RESPONSE OPTIONAL.* To save time and money, we use e-mail extensively. Your e-mail address is not required, but it will be very helpful.

Section 2. Qualifications

- **Question 5:** *RESPONSE REQUIRED.* You must be a Washington State registered voter.
- **Question 6:** *RESPONSE REQUIRED.* The applicant must be a landowner or farm operator.
- **Question 7:** *RESPONSE REQUIRED.* Residing within the conservation district is not a requirement, but highest preference will be given to a candidate who lives within the conservation district, followed by a candidate who owns land but does not reside within the conservation district.
- **Question 8:** *RESPONSE REQUIRED.* “Special circumstances” means you do not reside within the boundary of the conservation district but wish to be considered for appointment as a supervisor of that conservation district. Please attach a separate letter explaining why the State Conservation Commission should consider you as a candidate for this position. Helpful information may include, but is not limited to:
 - Whether you manage land inside the district boundary.
 - Whether you are an incumbent seeking reappointment to this position.
 - Whether you have ever served as a conservation district supervisor before.
 - Where you bring knowledge, skills and abilities of unique value to the conservation district.

Section 3. General Experience

- **Question 9:** *RESPONSE REQUIRED.* It is very helpful to know what you do for a living.
- **Question 10:** *RESPONSE OPTIONAL.* While responses to this question are optional, information you provide will be helpful to the State Conservation Commission in considering your application.

- **Question 11: *RESPONSE REQUIRED.*** Again, this information will be used in considering your application.
- **Question 12: *RESPONSE REQUIRED.*** Part of being an effective supervisor involves directing others and accepting direction from the board. Letter(s) of reference help us evaluate how well you can fill these roles. There is no limit on the number of letters of reference or support you can provide, and we encourage you to garner support from other organizations and people for this application.

Section 4. Conservation District Experience

Preference may be given to candidates who have more experience with conservation districts. Attending Board meetings as a private citizen or serving as an Associate Supervisor are ways to gain such experience. Involvement with conservation districts in other locations also offers useful experience.

- **Question 13: *RESPONSE REQUIRED.***
- **Question 14: *RESPONSE REQUIRED.*** Preference will be given to candidates who have attended at least one public meeting of the conservation district board of supervisors.
- **Question 15: *RESPONSE REQUIRED.*** The State Conservation Commission is charged with appointing supervisors “who shall be qualified by training and experience to perform the specialized skilled services required of them.” Training or experience in natural resources, non-profit or governmental operations, grant solicitation and business management are examples of useful areas of training and experience. You may provide other areas that you think will provide benefit as a board member.
- **Question 16: *RESPONSE REQUIRED.***
- **Question 17: *RESPONSE REQUIRED.*** Preference will be given to candidates who complete an orientation provided by the State Conservation Commission or who are Associate Supervisors or regularly attend meetings of the Conservation District Board of Supervisors.
- **Question 18: *RESPONSE OPTIONAL.*** If the conservation district does not provide its mission statement, strategic plan and vision with this application, please ask for it. People have different impressions of the role of a conservation district. It is important that you understand the role of this conservation district in your community. Your views may include agreement with the district’s purpose and goals or suggestions for areas that you believe should change. **There are no right or wrong answers here!** New supervisors bring with them new ideas and energy that are vital to keeping conservation districts responsive to the changing factors affecting natural resource conservation.

Section 5. Position Requirements

- **Question 19: *RESPONSE REQUIRED.*** We need to be sure you understand this is an unpaid position.
- **Question 20: *RESPONSE REQUIRED.*** Expenses for supervisors to attend conservation district-related meetings can be reimbursed by the conservation district. We need to know if you are willing to invest the time needed to be an effective board supervisor.
- **Question 21: *RESPONSE REQUIRED.*** We may wish to talk with you before the position is filled.
- **Question 22: *RESPONSE REQUIRED.*** We need to be sure you understand the information you provide is not exempt from public disclosure, unless your right to privacy is infringed.

How to submit your application

If you have any questions about filling out this application, your conservation district, or the responsibilities of a Supervisor please call your local conservation district. It is important that this appointed supervisor position is the **right role for you** and that you are the **right person for it**, so questions are encouraged!

Your completed application and attached materials should be mailed to the **Washington Conservation Commission, P. O. Box 47721, Olympia, WA 98504-7721**. We cannot accept faxed or e-mailed applications. Your application must be signed and dated. You may be interviewed by telephone or in person.

The appointment process

Between September and December, a regional committee will meet to evaluate all applications for appointment in your region of Washington State. One or more representatives from that committee may contact you seeking more information.

The committee will make recommendations in an open public meeting of the Conservation Commission at the end of November or first part of December. The Conservation Commission will make appointments for positions that expire on December 31 at that meeting. However, if no suitable applicants are available for appointment, the Conservation Commission may choose to delay some appointments to a later meeting.

By mid-December, you can expect a letter from the Conservation Commission telling you whether you were appointed. If you are selected, you will take office on or after January 1 at the first regular or special meeting of your conservation district. The Regional Manager (a Conservation Commission employee) for your conservation district will contact you and offer to provide additional orientation and training to help make your new position more productive and enjoyable.

We thank you for your interest in this important position and encourage you to continue to participate with your conservation district. Local conservation districts are one of the only entities focused on providing non-regulatory technical and financial assistance for implementing conservation on private lands.

Checklist

Please be sure you have the following items in your mailing to the Conservation Commission:

- The application form, signed and dated.
- Your comments on the conservation district's mission and plan.
- Your resume or personal biography.
- Contact information for references (Letter(s) of reference sent separately.).